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old town going before, as well as preparing the way for, our age of conquest in the forces of nature, and to warrant the adoption for his native city of the word on the great artist's tombstone, — "Emigravit;" and, with wider appreciation of the charm and glory of this shrine of mediæval art, may an American use the fragment of a song which Mr. Whitling prefixes to his volume: —

"Wenn einer Deutschland kennen  
Und Deutschland lieben soll,  
Wird man ihm Nürnberg nennen  
Der edlen Künste voll;

Dich nimmermehr veraltet  
Du treue, fleiss'ge Stadt!  
Wo Dürers Kraft gewaltet  
Und Sachs gesungen hat."

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ART. VIII. — *Message of the President of the United States communicating, in compliance with a Resolution of the Senate, the Correspondence of Messrs. McLane and Parker, late Commissioners to China.* 35th Congress, 2d Session. Ex. Doc. No. 22. pp. 1424.

HERE is a volume of fourteen hundred closely-printed pages, being the enormous record of the doings of two of our diplomatic agents in the East, and extending over the space of but three years. Looking through it, one need not wonder that archives of this sort are beyond the reach of ordinary readers, or that diplomatic communications are not always read, even by the Secretary to whom they are addressed. Yet there are in this huge volume many matters of interest, illustrative of our diplomatic relations with China, which we shall endeavor to evolve, and which, precisely and intelligibly stated, cannot fail to attract attention. It completes the documentary history of our Oriental diplomacy down to Mr. Reed's special mission in 1857; and it is to what occurred before that gentleman's arrival in China that we desire to direct our readers. Nothing has since been given to the public, either in this country or in Great Britain, except Mr. Secretary Cass's instructions, with the letter to Lord Napier, and the correspondence of Lord Elgin and Yeh anterior to the attack on Canton. The new treaties have not been officially promulgated. We men-

tion this as a reason for abstaining from any notice of recent events, which might be supposed to be more interesting than the ineffectual diplomacy which preceded them. Still it is absolutely essential to understand what had been previously done, or attempted, before anything like a safe judgment can be formed on the results of 1858.

The outline of American diplomacy in China may be easily traced. On the conclusion of the war of 1842, our government determined to open diplomatic intercourse with the empire, and selected as its first Envoy Mr. Edward Everett, then Minister to the Court of St. James. On his declining the post, Mr. Caleb Cushing was appointed, and reached China in the spring of 1844. The sound of English artillery was in the ears of the frightened Chinese; the marks of the ravages of an English invasion in the south and centre and along the coasts of China were very fresh; and, what was still more propitious, the official to whom was intrusted the duty of pacificating the foreigners was a man of relatively liberal views, or, at least, one who saw that the only way to get rid of them, or to circumscribe the sphere of their intrusion, was to make prompt concessions, and to seem generous and conciliatory. Such was Keying, with whom, at Waughia, near Macao, on the 3d of July, 1844, Mr. Cushing signed a treaty of "peace, amity, and commerce," which has regulated our intercourse from that day to this, and which, we infer, is the basis of the new compact of 1858. Keying's character is yet a mystery, and his story, as we understand it, quite a romance. During the negotiations, last summer, at Tientsin, he reappeared on the scene, was kindly treated by the neutral ministers, roughly repelled by the belligerent allies, suspected and watched by his colleagues, and then he suddenly disappeared from view, in all probability terminating his career by suicide or on the scaffold. How just this punishment was, — how far Keying deserved well or ill of his imperial master, or of those with whom he once negotiated on terms of apparent friendliness, — it is not easy yet to determine.

The English and French officials assert with vehemence, that in the negotiations of 1842-44, and in his subsequent conduct, he was loyal to his own country, and false and hostile to

foreigners. They claim to establish this on the evidence of intercepted documents, found in Canton. On the other hand, it is very certain that Keying was never able, for any length of time, to command confidence at court, but from 1842 downward has been the sport of all sorts of political fortune, with a pretty uniform and steady tendency towards the catastrophe which has determined his fate. The truth would seem to be, that he was neither the very liberal and enlightened statesman foreigners imagined him to be, nor the arch intriguer the English have latterly described him. Unlike Yeh, who believed nothing and feared nothing till Captain Key seized him by the collar and a Jack-tar grasped him (no easy task) round the waist, and then was frightened out of his wits, Keying, when sent to avert the storm, had sense enough to see that peace on any terms was preferable to such a war, and shrewdness and good manners to impress favorably all who met him. Mr. Cushing, after he had concluded his negotiations, spoke of him as eminently "a liberal-minded statesman;" and Sir John Davis, — not the most friendly commentator on Chinese conduct, — in the second edition of his very clever book, published as late as 1857, refers to his "estimable and pacific character," speaks of him as "a man of wisdom, and alive to the real interests of his country," and says that, "with him and his Tartar colleague Elipoo, moderation, humanity, and comparative sincerity took the place of blustering, cruelty, and evasion." That the change of opinion as to Keying, in consequence of the new revelations at Canton, has had some policy about it, — or, in other words, that the belligerent plenipotentiaries deemed it expedient, for some temporary reason, to overrate his anti-foreign feelings, and treat him as an enemy, — we further infer from Mr. Reed's guarded but very intelligible language on this subject, in the speech he made at Philadelphia, on his return, last summer, from China. "I look back," said he, "to the strange scene of Keying's advent to Tientsin and his flight, with entire contentment that I extended courtesy to a broken-down old man, and that no share of responsibility for this poor heathen's fall rests on me." Be all this as it may, it was very fortunate that Keying continued in favor till the American and French negotiations were

concluded, in 1844-5. Mr. Cushing met him in the true spirit of firmness and conciliation, and, reviewing, as we are able to do, the whole history of our diplomatic relations with China with entire freedom from prejudice, we take especial pleasure in recording our admiration of the discretion and ability shown by our plenipotentiary at that time; and this we do with the more emphasis, as Mr. Cushing's diplomacy has been so unkindly and unjustly criticised in the "Thirty Years' View" of Colonel Benton.

Mr. Cushing was fortunate in being able to despatch his work in six months, and he took passage across the Pacific to the west coast of Mexico in 1845. And here one may well pause and note the changes of the fourteen years which have elapsed since, his work concluded, he came homeward by the Pacific route. In 1844 there was not on the western coast of America, except in some trapper settlement, a spot where the English language was spoken, or the American flag was raised; and Mr. Cushing made a journey of adventure and peril, by the most available route, from San Blas to Vera Cruz. There were then no actual railroads or immediately prospective canals,—no thought of Pacific railways, or mails in twenty days from one seaboard to another. A year later, in 1845, Mr. Webster, in a speech at Faneuil Hall, speaking of the settlements on the Pacific, and especially of Oregon, said that "no sensible man could imagine that settlements so distant could be governed either by the American Congress or the British Parliament,—could be an American state or territory, or an English colony." "I look forward," said he, prophecy kindling in the blaze of his rhetoric, "to the period when they will raise a standard for themselves—as they ought to do—as not so far distant but that many, many now present, and those not among the youngest of us, will see a Pacific republican nation. There will exist at the mouth of the Columbia, or more probably farther south, a great Pacific republic,—a nation where our children may go for a residence, separating themselves from this government, and forming an integral part of a new government half-way between England and China,—too far remote from Europe and from this side of the American continent to be under the govern-

mental influence of either country." Alas for prophecy! Alas for all reasoning as to the future, in our part of the world, at least! Lord Granville, in reply to some dismal vaticinations the other day in Parliament, said, very neatly, that it was "a great comfort for public men to reflect, that the most fallacious guide in the world for political conduct is uninspired prophecy." The Pacific republic is indefinitely postponed; California and Oregon are as loyal States of this Union as New Jersey and Connecticut; and New Caledonia, bating a little gold-hunting exorbitance, is as submissive a colony as any under the care of Sir Bulwer Lytton or the Duke of Newcastle. Across the ocean where Mr. Cushing sailed in the little brig Perry there is a great tide of Oriental travel, and thousands of Chinese are willingly seeking a new home and a new field of industry in that wonderful Anglo-Saxon community of California, which fourteen years ago was not.

To Mr. Cushing immediately succeeded Commodore Biddle, who exchanged ratifications with Keying, and Mr. Alexander H. Everett, who died at Canton soon after his arrival, and whose desolate and ill-secured grave is pointed out to the traveller, near Whampoa. Mr. John W. Davis succeeded Mr. Everett. His despatches have not been published; but it is well known to those conversant with our affairs in the East, that it is to Mr. Davis's attention and modest exertions we are indebted for the consolidation, as far as it has gone, of our peculiar judicial system in China, and the enactment of the statute that regulates it. How peculiar and comprehensive that system is, and what responsible duties it delegates to our chief diplomatic officer in China, is evident from the provision of the act of Congress, which, in the exercise of these functions, clothes him with almost unlimited legislative powers. The leading incident of Mr. Davis's diplomatic service was his interview — the only one since Keying's time by any foreign minister — with the Imperial Commissioner at Canton. This was in 1848, when Seu met our Commissioner at Howqua's suburban residence, and Yeh attended as a subordinate official. Mr. Davis left a very high character for intelligence, discretion, and devotion to his duty.

Mr. Humphrey Marshall was appointed by Mr. Fillmore, and

his action in China, to which we wish we had space more particularly to refer, (for it was in every way creditable,) has been fully illustrated by the unreserved publication of his despatches. So unreserved, in fact, or so careless, was this publication, that Mr. Marshall's most confidential letters to his government — those which he marked "Confidential," and which, because they contained very strong and unfavorable criticisms on the action of other powers, he desired might not appear in print — were all published. Happily there was nothing in them to give just offence; but the system is a very mischievous one, and might lead to untoward results. Aside from individual and political embarrassment, it has another bad effect. It is an inducement to a foreign minister to be always writing for the public and for effect. There is always more or less of this under the English and American system of Parliamentary supervision; but there will be nothing but ambitious rhetoric and declamatory diplomacy, if all that ministers write to their governments is to be put in print.

Mr. Marshall's year in China (1853) was one of great political confusion, when the star of the Taeping revolt culminated, and the imperial dynasty seemed tottering to its fall. Shanghae was taken by the rebels, Peking was threatened, and Nanking fell. Yeh, engaged in deadly conflict with the Kwangtung revolutionists, had a better excuse than before or since for not attending to foreign affairs and receiving ministers; and Mr. Marshall was doomed to be an anxious looker-on in the North, and never to meet a plenipotentiary properly authorized to receive him. On the 4th of July, 1853, he had a formal interview, attended by no definite result, at Knaonson, three days' journey from Shanghae, with Eliang, the Governor-General of the central provinces, and brother to the Prime Minister Kweiliang, who negotiated the treaties of 1858. It ended in nothing but new evasion, and new reference of everything and everybody to the seat of mischief and perplexity at Canton. During his whole mission Mr. Marshall was actively engaged in protecting the interests of his countrymen, and had leisure enough to write a mass of despatches to Washington of great interest, and of a bulk surpassed only by the volume lately issued. To one chapter —

and a very painful one — of Mr. Marshall's experience, as revealed in his correspondence, we feel it our duty, by way of warning in the future, specially to refer. We allude to the constant difficulty, entirely unprovoked on his part, with the naval commanders. We have all heard and read of the traditional incompatibility of naval officers and ambassadors; and we remember the stories of the English Plenipotentiary — Lord Ponsonby, if we mistake not — who was arrested for coming on deck in his slippers; of Mr. Rodney's filling up a frigate with tools of husbandry, and his quarrel with Commodore Biddle; of Chancellor Livingston and Captain McNeill; of John Randolph's exploits on his way to Cronstadt; — but until we read these papers we did hope that such discreditable conflicts between public officers serving one government had long since ceased. Mr. Marshall went to China by the overland route, and on reaching Hong Kong or Macao found the corvette *Saratoga*, whose commander agreed to take, and did take, the minister to Whampoa. For this act of courtesy, Commodore Aulick, then in command, reprimanded the unlucky officer, and, if we mistake not, brought him to a court-martial; and when the minister, passing by with great dignity the first discourtesy, asked for a ship of war to take him to the northern ports, the Commodore flatly refused, unless the minister would confer with him, and tell him exactly what he meant to do, and his own judgment should approve it. The conclusion of Mr. Marshall's reply to this deserves to be quoted, for it tells the tale of wrong very clearly.

“There can be no discussion between us as to our relative rank and power. There is no foundation on which to rest such a question, and I am not disposed to allow myself to be entangled in any dispute of the kind. When it shall become my duty, as the Commissioner to China, to demand the ships of war you command for a service whose object is not communicated to you, it will be a proper occasion to question my power, and, if you choose, to refuse obedience on your official responsibility. In this case, your anxiety to preserve your official prerogative from the appearance of submission has led you into the presentation of your topic of discussion prematurely. I shall not argue with you as to your duty. Your long official experience and exalted position have accustomed you to act in view of your responsibility to public authority

at home. To that I shall leave your case. There remains for me only to yield most reluctantly to the necessity under which your determination places me, and to close the diplomatic intercourse between China and the United States until the means are placed within my control to proceed to deliver my letter of credence to the Emperor through the channel exhibited by the treaty. I shall retire by the first opportunity I find to Macao; there await the arrival of your successor, your retirement from command, or the order from the Department to which you belong, enabling me to proceed to my post. My exposure to the discourtesy you have shown; the unfortunate impression which must be left on the minds of the Chinese officials by your withdrawal of the *Saratoga*, and your refusal to supply her place; the procrastination of impending questions; the loss of important advantages in political arrangements, and whatever of sacrifice of public or private interests may ensue, — will belong to the catalogue of errors flowing from your unfortunate estimate of your official obligations and privileges, and from no fault of mine.”

The change that soon after took place in the command — Aulick being relieved by Commodore Perry — brought no relief to the afflicted minister. The new Commodore was a plenipotentiary himself, and deeply impressed with the importance of his diplomatic trust. What was China, with its material interests, its great staples, its millions of pounds of tea and silk, its factories and rich godowus, its vast American capital and its fleets of American clippers penetrating every accessible nook of its coast, — what were all these practical, substantial things in comparison with Japan and its exploration? For the short interval between Commodore Aulick's departure and Perry's arrival, the command devolved on a very gallant and worthy gentleman, Captain John Kelly, who, as senior officer, acted in a most accommodating spirit, and sent Mr. Marshall north in a steamer; but the moment Commodore Perry arrived, all these facilities were withdrawn, and the same ground taken, aside from the Japanese necessities, as by Captain Aulick, though in rather less offensive language, — namely, that where the minister ought to go, and what he ought to do, should be matter of joint conference and decision. This discreditable conflict lasted during the rest of Mr. Marshall's sojourn in China.

Now it seems to us that there is nothing clearer than that

the diplomatic representative of the country, when, as nine times out of ten is the case in the East, there is no military emergency, ought to be regarded as the superior. There is a perfectly well-defined line beyond which this superiority cannot go, and ought not to go, without injury to executive action. If the minister were to ask or direct the commanding officer to take him from any point where there was a military emergency or necessity for his remaining, or to any point the navigation towards which might endanger his ships, he ought to, and no doubt would, refuse; but for a naval officer, when there are no such purely professional reasons, to say that he will not send or accompany a minister until his judgment is satisfied as to the necessity or expediency of the movement, is to reverse rank with a vengeance. With the discreditable and unofficer-like system of newspaper scribbling now prevalent in our naval service, diplomatic secrets would have a poor chance. Between sensible men,—that is, men whose judgment on questions of public duty is not clouded or perplexed by tenaciousness, suspicion, and the exaggeration of etiquette,—difficulties of the kind can hardly occur, and we are far from intimating that the fault is always on one side. There are captious, overbearing, troublesome ambassadors, as well as admirals and commodores; but the government at Washington ought to bear in mind the differences that may arise on such questions of rank, and to provide against them by very precise instructions. This was done in the case of Mr. Marshall's successor, at whose disposal was placed first the *Susquehanna*, which took him up the Yang-tse-Kiang, and then the *Powhatan*, in which he visited the Gulf of Pechelee. In the case of Mr. Reed, as we learn from the published instructions, the government fortunately went still further, and not only furnished him with a home on board the finest frigate in the service, but specially instructed the naval commander-in-chief to consult freely with the minister as to the movements of the squadron, and to pay the highest regard to his wishes. "If," the Secretary adds, "it should become necessary, in order to accomplish the objects of Mr. Reed's mission, that the squadron should be concentrated at any one place, upon his communicating his wishes to you, you will promptly pro-

ceed to the point designated and co-operate with him." The effect was, that, in these two instances, there was a perfectly good understanding and kind feeling all round. Mr. McLane had the use of two frigates in succession, as he needed them ; and in 1858 the squadron was, from time to time, without detriment to the naval service, concentrated at the request of the minister, and, by the prompt and judicious distribution of the force under Flag-Officer Tatnall (the law compels us so to entitle him), the negotiations both in China and Japan were facilitated. Mr. Marshall had no such assistance.

President Pierce offered the Chinese mission to Mr. Robert J. Walker, by whom it was at first accepted, but ultimately declined ; and then to Mr. Robert M. McLane, our present Minister in Mexico, who, taking the overland route, reached China and entered upon his duties in March, 1854, Mr. Marshall having previously returned to the United States. No better fortune attended Mr. McLane in his attempts at personal intercourse with Yeh than his predecessors had found. It may amuse our readers to see the variations of this perverse man's discourtesy. Irritated, and justly so, as the recipients of such letters must have been, we doubt if even they can read them now without a smile. To this collection we have added Yeh's letter to Lord Elgin, the whole presenting a very odd display of gems of Chinese diplomacy.

" We," wrote Yeh and his colleague to Mr. Marshall, "are delighted fully to understand that the honorable Commissioner has received the superintendence of trade at the five ports. We have heretofore heard that the honorable Commissioner is mild and even-tempered, just and upright, and that he will manage everything in strict conformity with the treaty, and all will be in the highest degree proper and harmonious ; and we, the Minister and Governor, are exceedingly gratified at the thought. As to the subject of setting a time for an interview, we, the Minister and Governor, are also exceedingly desirous of a mutual interview, when face to face we may converse, in order to manifest the good correspondence of our respective countries ; but I, the Minister, am at present at the Saou-Chow Pass, and I, the Governor, having the superintendence of everything, have not the slightest leisure, and can only await the return of the Minister, after which he will select a

felicitous day, and address you, and meet you at a pleasant interview." \*

To Mr. McLane he wrote :—

"I am delighted to learn that the Commissioner has arrived in the south of China, to receive the management of the commercial affairs at the five ports. Certainly everything must be conducted in the highest degree justly and harmoniously, and I, the Minister, am exceedingly comforted in my mind. As to appointing a time for presentation, I, the Minister, am also desirous of an interview, in order to manifest our friendship and good correspondence; but just at this moment, I, the Minister, am superintending the affairs of the army in several provinces, and day and night have no rest. Suffer me, then, to wait for a little leisure, when I will make selection of a propitious day, that we may have a pleasant meeting."

In 1856, when Mr. Parker announced his advent, Yeh answered, rather more curtly :—

"It is a matter of satisfaction that you, the honorable Commissioner, have returned to Canton to oversee the mercantile affairs at the five ports, which will be now well managed; but as to the transmission of the letter from your country to the Emperor, and the request for a personal interview, to deliver it for transmission, of which you speak, I have to reply that, as you have been many years in Kwangtung, where I have already seen you, in a personal interview, there is no need of further argument on this point. Furthermore, owing to affairs in Kwangsi requiring the despatch of troops, and other details respecting supplying the forces, I have not a moment's leisure. If you wish to send the President's letter, it can be made up and duly sealed, and sent to me, and I will forward it to court by a good opportunity, which will be fully sufficient."

To Lord Elgin—and this, too, in answer to an earnest and peremptory admonition of what would be the certain consequences of any evasion—Yeh replied that Sir George Bonham, in former years, had been moderate in his demands, and Sir John Davis exacting; that Sir George had been made a

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\* When, in January, 1854, Mr. Marshall announced to Yeh his intention to return home, after all his vexations, Yeh replied, "I avail myself of the occasion to present my compliments, and trust that, of late, your blessings have been increasingly tranquil."

baronet, and had the Order of the Bath,—“a badge of honor to be borne on his person, very goodly to behold.”

“Thus,” said he, “your Excellency’s nation showed that they thought the Plenipotentiary Bonham right, and the Plenipotentiary Davis wrong; and it is the duty of your Excellency, who is come here in obedience to your instructions, to imitate the conduct of the Plenipotentiary Bonham. It is equally imperative that you should decline to imitate the conduct of the Plenipotentiary Davis. The propositions in your letter have been suggested by some mischievous person at your side; they are not your Excellency’s own conception,” &c., &c.

In less than a fortnight after this, Canton was bombarded and assaulted, and Yeh a prisoner on board the *Inflexible*. Poor Yeh! Very little, if at all, worse than his fellows, he has earned an ugly name in history, and is looked upon by that vast mass of people who take their opinions from English newspapers as the incarnation of all that was ferocious and truculent. Yet the very same revelations which are supposed to prove Keying’s complicity in anti-foreign policy show that in all that Yeh did or wrote he was the obedient servant of his imperial master, and did nothing without instructions. We are not his apologists, but mean merely to hint that, like another illustrious being, he is not quite as black as he is painted, and was really but a representative man. As we write, the news of his death has been received. The Colonial Press of Hong Kong (the fit exponent of that detestable community) describes the bringing back of his corpse in a business-like manner, a happy combination of the merchant and the undertaker. “There will be no ceremony over him. The Emperor has taken away all his titles. He is no more than the commonest coolie in the streets. The body was found in a fair state of preservation, though by no means sweet. So much for Yeh. Seven hundred dollars’ freight-money from Calcutta to Canton was a good deal to pay for such a result.” The English, in one respect at least, seem to have thought that Yeh was a sort of Chinese Napoleon. Not only did they send him to die in dismal exile at Fort William, but, exactly as they did forty years ago, when O’Meara wrote indecent letters about Bonaparte to be read in the low revels of Carlton House, they caged up with Yeh, on board the *Inflexible*, a

caricature correspondent of the "Times," who entertained the British and American public with descriptions of his eructations and his vomiting (literally), and all his personal habits, — and this when he was a prisoner of war!

Repelled from the south of China, Mr. McLane at once went on board the *Susquehanna* frigate, and reached Shanghai within a few weeks, if not days, after the military escapade in which the residents of the foreign settlements came into bloody conflict with the imperial forces, then besieging the city. Everything was in confusion, and there seemed little prospect of a restoration of tranquillity; the rebels being in possession of the city, and what may be called its suburbs, and the imperial forces and authorities hanging round the foreign settlement only, it would seem, for purposes of annoyance.

The result of this state of things was the agitation of a very grave question as to the collection of duties on foreign ships. This had arisen when Mr. Marshall was minister, though the final decision was made by Mr. McLane. Its history is curious, if only for the illustration it affords of the different modes of action by ourselves and the English towards Orientals. In the autumn of 1853 the city of Shanghai fell into the hands of the rebels, and the Chinese custom-house authorities, in no causeless terror, fled from the neighborhood, the Taoutae taking refuge in an American counting-house. The first idea which suggested itself to the mercantile mind was, that a chance for increased shipments to great advantage was thus presented, if Shanghai could for a season be converted into a free port; and, though we have no access to the "Circulars" of the day, one of the documents now published (p. 370) shows that instantly on the news, as communicated by mercantile correspondents at Shanghai, reaching the United States, not only "heavy purchases of merchandise at high prices were made, and goods shipped at hitherto unknown rates of freight and exchange, but heavy sales of tea and silk were effected at home, on the assumption that the export duties were at an end"! It is not at all unlikely that the vision arose before the eyes of many, of Shanghai once a free port always one, and of release thenceforward from the inconvenience of paying duties in whole or in part. The mys-

teries of "long price" and "short price," by which, according to the bargain, the Chinese or the foreigner compromises the duties, would be needless. It is difficult, with all the papers before us, to understand how this expectation could have arisen; for the American minister lost not a moment's time, on the suspension of the imperial authority, in establishing a provisional regulation, by which the actual payment or ultimate security of the duties was provided. The merchants, or at least a number of them, remonstrated at this decision, resting their objections mainly on the ground that the Vice-Consul, Mr. Cunningham, (a gentleman whom these papers and all concurrent testimony show to have been a man of great energy and integrity,) to whom the manifests were to be delivered, and the duties paid or secured, was a rival merchant. Mr. Marshall reiterated his decision, in terms which admitted of no evasion, denying that such a suspension by violence of custom-house control annulled the treaty obligation to pay duties, and the system (the British Consul at the time agreeing to the plan) went into successful operation. The duty obligations of American merchants accumulated at the consulate, at the end of the interregnum, to the amount of 354,149 taels, or 524,000 dollars.\*

"What possible advantage," said Mr. Marshall, in his reply to the merchants, "can result from a failure to pay duties according to the treaty? Who is to be benefited by the success of such a project? If you do not pay the duties here, the Chinese seller of tea or silk must pay them in the interior, and the prices will rise by the amount of the duties. The American consumer will never be benefited by the operation. Your correspondents in the United States will receive no advantage. I cannot fancy any reason for anxiety upon such a proposition, or any sufficient motive for its adoption. The effect of such a course as you propose would be, I fear, to expose the United States to the charge of being controlled by sordid calculation, and to cause the Chinese government to estimate the future promises of the United

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\* Our readers may form an idea of the importance of this great port of Shanghai to the Chinese revenue, when they learn that in three years and a half — from 1854 to 1857 — the aggregate duties collected were \$10,820,075, thus divided: British, \$6,847,407; American, \$3,183,668; other nations, \$778,981. At this rate, the unpaid English duties of 1853 must have amounted to upwards of \$1,100,000.

States as valuable or valueless according to the opportunities our countrymen might have of profit or loss, and not according to a sense of moral obligation."

It is very clear that the British authorities did not adopt, nor the British merchants acquiesce in this system, so obviously just and honest, as readily as the Americans did. They seem to have had a shrewd guess that the home government, whenever the time came to decide who should bear a pecuniary loss, the Chinese government or the English merchants, would take care to make it fall on the Chinese. But besides this, the English residents took what they called justice into their own hands; for when, on September 7, 1853, the Chinese custom-house in the foreign settlement was sacked by a rebel mob, an English resident, with his coolies, was at work leading the onset, and no English authority interposed. When a rebel leader from the city of Shanghae sought an interview with Mr. Marshall, then residing in the foreign settlement, the British Consul interfered to prevent it; but he seemed to have no force at his command to protect the Chinese custom-house from plunder. When the Taoutae first returned and re-established a provisional custom-house, the British Consul refused to recognize it, though the American Commissioner was willing to do so.

Mr. McLane on his arrival found the question of the actual payment of the duties still undetermined. The merchants were reluctant to see their obligations enforced, and urged many plausible reasons against this measure. It formed the subject of elaborate correspondence between them and the minister. It was then not settled as definitively as it has been since, by the action of the Executive at Washington, that the Consular Courts were not open to suits against American residents by the government of China for duties; but there was a very great reluctance on the part of the merchants to submit to that jurisdiction. In his political character, the minister had no right to determine the question. At last the idea was suggested,—by whom it does not very clearly appear,—that the controversy should be submitted to the arbitration of Mr. McLane, and this course was at once cheerfully acquiesced in, first by the American firms, and then by the Taoutae. Nothing

could have been more creditable to the merchants than this mode of adjusting the difficulty ; for it shows that, although for themselves and their constituents they had a large pecuniary interest in withholding the payment and delaying the adjudication, they recognized the duty of observing the obligations of the treaty, and the obvious policy of protecting the Chinese revenue. Mr. McLane examined the subject with great care, and finally made an award, by which he affirmed the binding force of the treaty upon the American merchants, and, after deducting certain abatements for losses on exchange, &c., decided that there was due to the Chinese government the sum of about one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, every dollar of which has since been paid. When, on the 20th of November, 1854, Mr. McLane held his final interview with the provincial governor, the following conversation is reported :—

“ *Governor Kieh.* How about the duties ?

“ *Mr. McLane.* I have filed a decree in the United States Consulate awarding 118,049 taels.

“ *Governor Kieh.* How as to the English duties ?

“ *Mr. McLane.* I do not know. Sir John Bowring has informed me they will not be settled till he hears from home, and the Queen’s answer has not been received. Heretofore we have acted in concert ; now I act alone. I have no doubt the English will pay in the same proportion as the Americans, and their amount will be much larger than ours. This, however, is a mere opinion.

“ *Governor Kieh.* Better make this matter clear to the Consul. If all foreign officers were like you and Dr. Parker, and all Chinese like me, there never would have been any difficulty.

“ *Mr. McLane.* I have given a just award, but the amount is not so great as it would have been in time of peace.”

Relatively small as was the sum secured by Mr. McLane’s award,—and it was somewhat reduced afterward by mismanagement in the investments,—it was, as this dialogue shows, gratefully received by the Chinese authorities, who were, however, sadly disappointed in their expectations from the British, and, we must admit, had a narrow escape as to the Americans. Sir John Bowring, to do him justice, was anxious to see the British duties paid, or at least adjudicated. In July, 1854,

Mr. McLane wrote to Secretary Marcy to that effect, but at the very time a despatch was on its way from Lord Clarendon repudiating the whole arrangement, and directing the Consul to return and cancel the obligations given by the merchants for the duties; and while the Americans, almost without a murmur, paid, as we have seen, one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars to discharge obligations which in law could scarcely be enforced, not one dollar was ever paid on English account.

It is fair to say that, but for Mr. McLane's award, nothing would have been collected from the Americans; for on the 8th of November, Secretary Marcy, adopting Lord Clarendon's view, or agreeing with him without concert, instructed our Minister to have all the obligations for duties cancelled and returned to the parties, and to rescind absolutely the provisional regulations. When this reached China, in the winter of 1855, the award had been made, and filed in a somewhat irregular manner, and the proceeds of the obligations had been collected and invested, though not paid over. Mr. Parker, who had succeeded Mr. McLane as acting Commissioner, or *Chargé d'Affaires*, advised the merchants of this decision, but, naturally embarrassed by the position in which he found himself with the Chinese after the submission and award, adopted the middle course of directing the Consul to return the obligations, and take new ones to pay the amount when the decision of the home government should be made, on a full knowledge of the facts.

"If," Dr. Parkér wrote to the Shanghae Consul, "on the receipt of this, the money paid by the merchants conformably to the award has been received by the Chinese government, then there the matter ends. On the other hand, if you have been officially notified that the imperial government decline to abide by their agreement, and to receive the money awarded and tendered, (as has been intimated,) the merchants are absolved from all obligations growing out of their agreement to the arbitration."

Luckily for Governor Kieh and the Chinese, Mr. Parker had rather a mutinous Consul at Shanghae to deal with,—a gentleman who, as appears from these papers, on one occasion wrote to his superior, "When his Excellency, Mr. McLane,

was here, I did all in my power to forward his views, without reference to my own. But so soon as he left, I have fallen back on the supreme law of the land,—the treaty,—and there I propose to base all my movements”; which, being interpreted, meant that he had obeyed Mr. McLane reluctantly, and did not mean to obey Mr. Parker at all. Accordingly, when Mr. Parker gave his directions as to the duty obligations, Mr. Murphy, the functionary in question, peremptorily refused to obey till he should receive instructions directly from Washington. The acting Commissioner, justly incensed at this refractoriness of his subordinate, threatened him with suspension; but it was only when the Consul did receive orders from the Department that he sullenly obeyed. The correspondence is very discreditable to this gentleman, and illustrative of the necessity of a clear understanding of the true mutual relations of our representatives abroad. There is more than one painful instance in these papers of consular insubordination, amounting almost to “bullying.” This special difficulty passed away pleasantly; for when Mr. Parker, in January, 1856, returned to China as a Commissioner in full, he and Mr. Consul Murphy met in Hong Kong and settled their personal controversy. Mr. Parker was evidently a kind-hearted man, and the Consul seems always to have made a very clear distinction in measuring his duty of respect between commissioners and acting commissioners, ministers and *chargés d'affaires*. In the mean time, Mr. McLane and Mr. Parker had both been at home, and explained fully the duty question, which was referred to the Attorney-General, Mr. Cushing, and so decided that, while there was no redress for the Chinese government in the Consular Courts, Mr. McLane’s award was as obligatory as that of any other individual to whom a valid submission has been made; and, as we have stated, the money was paid, and gladly, if not gratefully, received by the Chinese.

As we look at the question at this distance of time, and with the distinct impression that our gentle and generous treatment of these singularly astute and perverse Pagans, in contrast with the selfish course of our English friends, does us very little good, there can be no doubt that the McLane award

was a mistake, and that it cost our merchants an amount of money which might have been saved. Exorbitancy of action, (we use the words in a strict, and not at all an offensive sense,) on the part of officials, diplomatic or other, is always wrong, and never does any good in the end. Most of all is it apt to do harm when the action is judicial or semi-judicial, and where, as in China, there are judicial functions which are very extensive, and yet very precisely defined; and it is enough to make a lawyer's hair stand on end to read these documents, and see the intricacy and perplexity in which this whole business was involved,—how hard it is to unravel it, or to see on what precise principle the decision was made. We repeat that the settlement was very creditable to the American merchants, who for a long time had half a million of money virtually locked up, or subject to demand, and finally paid nearly half that sum, while not a shilling was ever paid by the English or French traders. We do not know whether, when Lord Elgin settled, if he ever did settle, the question of indemnities to British subjects, any claim of equitable set-off was hinted at by the Chinese negotiators, on account of these repudiated duties of 1854. If it was, it would not have been at all unreasonable.

In the state of things which we have described, at greater length than we intended, originated that which, in its past and prospective influence on the commercial relations of China, is of commanding interest. We mean what is commonly known as the Foreign Inspectorate of Customs, which, at first limited to the one port of Shanghai, has, we learn, by the late treaties been extended to all the ports, and is now in full operation. It does not appear who first suggested the plan; but its initiation is mainly due to Mr. McLane and Sir John Bowring. In 1854 the Chinese, seeing how terribly mismanaged their custom revenues were, and what a universal system of corruption and evasion of law, outside of their own iniquity, was springing up and rapidly becoming a normal state of things, either themselves suggested, or gladly received the suggestion when made by others, that three Inspectors, foreigners, one to be named by the Minister or Consul of each of the treaty powers, the United States, France, and Great Britain, should be appointed, and paid by the Chinese, whose duty it

should be to supervise the customs, and see that the duties provided by the treaty tariffs were collected. In this plan the merchants, without exception, gladly acquiesced,—though they changed their minds afterward, when the pinch of regularity came to be felt by them,—and it went at once into operation, and has been continued ever since. The Chinese cling to it as their only protection. Of course, were it not that everything in China is said to be and is exceptional, such a system or principle could not be upheld. It was objectionable, at least in its original form, under which the nominations for these inspectors were made by the consuls,—and their official oaths, and, for aught we know, their official bonds, filed in the consulates,—in making foreign governments responsible for the collection of Chinese revenue. It was objectionable in giving jobs and patronage to the consuls; and this was illustrated when Mr. Parker, supposing that he had the power to nominate, and that a vacancy had occurred, was told by the Taoutae that he had promised to keep the place vacant till the Consul, then absent on leave, should bring some friend from the United States to fill the place. It was objectionable, too, as it seemed to implicate the United States officials in connivance at the great smuggling operations in opium; for while every other article of import was subject to the supervision of the foreign inspectors, and the tonnage dues on any other than an opium-ship were collected by them below the anchorage at Woosung, opium and opium-ships were expressly withdrawn from their control, though every one knew that a duty was secretly levied on each chest, and that the drug was stored on board the hulks at Woosung, into which the steamers, English and American, regularly discharged it, within the limits of the port of Shanghai, or what we may call the collection district.\* If the inspectors had done their duty faithfully, they would have seized every chest of opium, and confiscated every ship that brought it; and their neglect to do so was to make themselves and their governments responsible for the connivance. This, in the case of the United States, whose

\* The foreign inspectors always shut their eyes to opium, except once or twice during the war with Russia, when, it being whispered that saltpetre was smuggled from Calcutta to Shanghai in opium-chests, they opened them very scrupulously.

treaty of 1844 expressly forbade the importation of opium, was a monstrous inconsistency. The difficulty is now removed by the Conventions of 1858, which make opium dutiable, and get rid of the miserable masquerade which for years has been enacted on the coast of China. Still, in principle, the appointment of foreign inspectors was wrong; and the act of Congress of August 18, 1856, puts an end entirely to the intervention of either minister or consul in these extra-territorial nominations to office, so that the inspectors are now, without any express nomination, selected by the Taoutae. Practically, the system has worked very well, in spite of the clamor raised against it by those who fancied they were interested in a loose and irregular system. Considerate and conscientious merchants — and there are many such — knew that, in the long run, it was better that the Chinese revenue should be maintained, and the scandal of violation of treaty obligations avoided; and the result, as we understand it, is, that while no responsibility for appointment or for the performance of duties is assumed by the treaty powers, the Chinese government has not only pledged itself to what is most desirable, a uniform collection system at the ports, but to the appointment of citizens of the treaty powers as inspectors. We regard this as one of the most important results of the late negotiations, and believe that it will, if fairly carried out, do more to “moralize” our commercial relations than anything that could have been done.

Beside this, which may be described as sedentary diplomacy, Mr. McLane, in the spring of 1854, made an exploratory trip up the great river in the Susquehanna, as far as Woohoo, about seventy miles above Nanking, and of course farther than any Western voyager had ever gone before. The English and French ministers, Sir George Bonham and M. de Bourbalon, had previously visited Nanking without effecting any very important results. They had seen the rebel camps, the rebel cities, and the marks of rebel devastation; and perhaps the only fruit of all the expeditions, including ours, was that it put an end forever to the delusion of the superior liberality and friendliness of the insurgents. The revelations made in the correspondence, to which we have space only thus incidentally to refer, are quite enough to extinguish the last spark of hope

or confidence that may yet exist in the mind of the most zealous and sanguine of missionary sympathizers, and to strengthen the conviction that, bad as the imperial government may be, it is the only organization with which foreign governments can safely deal, or on which foreigners can rely for the very moderate protection to be expected from any government in China. Until this year, Mr. McLane's expedition was the most adventurous ever made up the great river. Lord Elgin has, it seems, gone much farther; and it remains to be seen whether this farther progress has done anything substantial for the general interest. His Lordship evidently adopts the same opinions that we have expressed as to the relative results of the rebel and imperial organizations; for in some remarks by him, in August last, in the House of Lords, he said:—

“Beside considering the convenience and interests of those colleagues who were associated with him as the representatives of other nations, he was bound to consider likewise the interests of the Chinese government itself; for his conviction was, that nothing could be more prejudicial to the interest of Great Britain than that the resources of the Chinese government should be so crippled as to prevent their keeping up their position in the country. Nothing was more observable than the way in which the value of British imports was affected by the rise and fall of the imperial party. Their value rose and fell with the influence of the imperial government, just as certainly as the mercury in the thermometer was affected by the temperature.”

Mr. McLane, like his predecessor, Mr. Marshall, had a fruitless interview with the Viceroy Eliang, and in the fall of 1854, leaving Shanghae in the month of October, he set off in company with Sir John Bowring to make an effort in the north. The French Minister was to accompany them, but his ship, the *St. Jean d'Acre*, grounding off Woosung, and being damaged, he gave up the enterprise, Mr. McLane taking the French Secretary of Legation with him on board the *Powhatan*. The expedition consisted of the American steam-frigate *Powhatan*, accompanied by the exploring schooner *Fenimore Cooper* and the steamer *Hancock*, and the British steamer *Rattler*.

This was a dismal diplomatic experiment in its results,

though Sir John and Mr. McLane did all that men could do, dealing with bad weather — the approach of winter threatening to drive them back — and with a set of singularly acute and perverse officials, who were deputed to meet them, and who happened at this time to have a little right on their side as to the revision of the treaties. Sir John Bowring had taken up the idea that, by virtue of the “most favored” clause in the British treaty, he might claim the benefit of the privilege of revision at the expiration of the twelve years secured by the American and French treaties of 1844. We do not pause to point out the fallacy of this notion, which the Chinese discovered, and which we believe, though of this we do not speak positively, the Foreign Office disavowed. It is carrying derivative rights much too far; for really it seems to follow that, if it were sound, and had been admitted, Mr. McLane might, in his turn, under the “most favored” clause, claim the same privilege, and thus annul the express words of the contract itself. He did not, however, but justified his visit to the north on the ground of the grievances of which the United States complained, being willing, no doubt, to take his chance of making a new treaty, if his brother minister succeeded.

The English and American squadrons, if such they may be styled, anchored in the Gulf of Pechelée about the middle of October. This, as respects navigation, was comparatively an unknown region, and certainly a less propitious season than the allies now were forced to select could not have been found. The *Lion*, with Lord Macartney on board, had been there in the summer of 1796, and Lord Amherst in the *Alceste* in 1816. On two occasions afterward, once during the war, had British steamers been there; but on a coast where every now and then a great river turns from its ordinary course and makes a new outbreak into the ocean, there is not much help from such transmitted experience. Still, there was, with the aid of steam, no great risk, and the Powhatan and Rattler found themselves off the bar of the Peiho without any serious impediment. The secretaries, Mr. Medhurst and Mr. Parker, were sent on shore on a sort of diplomatic reconnoissance, the details of which, with their various and sometimes rather grotesque annoyances, are set forth in the documents before us. On one occasion Mr. Parker writes:—

“The hardest part of the day’s adventures remains to be mentioned. We started to return in the Chinese boat that brought us, and were chilled through, ‘stuck in the mud’ waiting more men to pull us through it. No sooner was the boat shoved off from the shore, than she was taken by wind and tide to seaward. We were in no small peril. However, we managed to fetch up on the mud-flat of the opposite shore, a quarter of a mile below the point of our embarkation. All efforts to stem wind and tide were futile. The sun was setting, and our only alternative was to remain in the boat all night, exposed to cold and hunger, and to being driven out to sea in a small boat, or to leap at once into the water and endeavor to wade through the long extent of mud-flat (which at low water makes out some miles) to the dry shore. We resolved on the latter expedient, and had taken off our boots and made ready to jump into the water, when we saw Captain Stevens, of the *John Hancock*, approaching us in his boat. He very kindly, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and the distance he had come and had to go before reaching the steamer beyond the bar, took us to a point from which we hoped to be able to reach the bank opposite our *lorcha*. This he effected with much difficulty, his men scarce able to stem the tide. We had now at least one mile to go through mud, through stubble-fields, across dikes, and over the parapets of the forts. In leaping one of the dikes we both sunk to our knees in the mire; and on approaching the fort the soldiers turned out *en masse*, as though they feared we had designs upon the fortress. We soon explained our situation, and they were satisfied. By the time the last rays of twilight were departing we arrived abreast of the *Chusan*, to which we were taken in one of her boats, grateful for the merciful providence that had rescued us from a night of great discomfort and some peril.”

The scene of these amphibious adventures was the mouth of the *Peiho*, where it is guarded by what have since attained some notoriety as the *Taku* forts; for although some of these documents are dated *Tientsin*, yet that city is at least sixty miles up the river, and was never reached in our time till 1858. The arrival of the ships at the outer anchorage produced great excitement and alarm at the imperial capital. The Russian missionaries, in an elaborate report to the authorities at *St. Petersburg*, described the popular, and, so far as they could observe it, the official agitation, and gave a very odd account of the devices suggested to resist an invasion, and to destroy the ships. One plan was to employ divers, who

were to be sent down in junks, and, swimming off to the frigates, were to bore holes in their bottoms and destroy them! At last, however, all modes of evasion being exhausted, and the weather for the time of year continuing moderate, the imperial court so far condescended as to send down a special Imperial Commissioner, Tsunglun, to meet the plenipotentiaries; and on the 3d of November, 1854, in a wretched tent near Taku, — the touching representations of Mr. McLane's ill health and Sir John Bowring's age having failed to secure better accommodation, — an interview was held. It lasted nearly all day, and was utterly fruitless. "I have not," said the Commissioner, "the slightest full powers to do anything;" and this he repeated over and over again. With such a disclaimer, it was idle to expect any good result; and how utterly desperate it was, and how little worth while was any attempt of the kind, may be understood from the revelation since made, that but a few months previously the Emperor had degraded a high officer, because in a memorial to the throne he had suggested that it might be well so far to humor the outside barbarian as to concede some of the privileges he sought, "*which were absolutely beneficial to China.*" Even such a concession was intolerable at Peking.\*

It is in reference to these attempted negotiations of 1854 that the intercepted documents found by the English and French in Canton have their special interest. We understand them to be — for they have not yet been made public — the official reports of Tsunglun to the Privy Council of his repulse of Sir John Bowring and Mr. McLane, and the imperial orders with regard to them sent to Yeh at Canton; and we infer them to be of value from the very earnest language

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\* The delay off the Peiho was turned to very good account by our naval men, and a most admirable survey, with soundings of the whole anchorage, was made by Lieutenant John Rodgers, commanding the United States steamer John Hancock. When, in December, 1858, the assault on Canton was made, the only topographical map of the city and suburbs in the possession of the allied commanders was one made by the Rev. Mr. Vroornan, an American missionary. Off the Peiho, and in the attack on the Taku forts, the admirals had no other guide than Lieutenant Rodgers's chart, a manuscript copy of which, sent by the Russian Minister at Washington to St. Petersburg and thence forwarded, happened to be in Count Pontiatine's possession. No copy of this chart was to be found in the American squadron, though equipped expressly for the China seas!

in which Mr. Reed, in his Philadelphia speech, referred to them, and to the rather shabby manner in which they were withheld from him. We quote the passage, not merely in illustration of our sketch, but in order to express our entire sympathy with the feeling which prompted its utterance :—

“ And here, arraigned as I have occasionally and thoughtlessly been, for a want of fidelity to my co-operators, (I have to use the word for want of a better,) I must refer to a matter of interest, and which, I confess, in some of its relations is yet a mystery. In the Yamun of Yeh, in Canton, were found many important documents, throwing much light on the past relations of the empire to foreigners. These were translated, and were in the hands of the allies. Some, of minor importance, were shown to me. One, however, purporting to be the report made by the commissioners who met Sir J. Bowring and Mr. McLane in 1854, and the imperial comments or *rescripts*, — a document of great and painful interest, as illustrating the habitual faithlessness of Chinese officials, — was in the hands of the allies during the whole of the difficulties at the Peiho, and was never shown to or seen by me. I never saw the document till three months afterwards, at Shanghae, when all was over, and it had but a faint historical interest. I do not venture to affirm that this was purposely withheld. It may have been forgotten. It related largely to important American affairs. It would have enabled me, in the difficult complication which arose, to regulate my conduct by a full and accurate knowledge of the whole truth. In one view I am sincerely rejoiced that the inadvertence or intention to which I refer kept these documents from me. They were certainly the most painful revelations of the mendacity and treacherous habits of the high officials of this empire yet given to the world. They cannot be read without contemptuous resentment; and I have no such confidence in my equanimity and self-control as to determine what might have been my inclination before and after the fall of the Taku forts, had the contents of these papers been known to me. Nothing, of course, that the Chinese authorities, high or low, could say or write, would have materially influenced my course of action, under or without instructions; but had these papers been seen by me, I am quite sure the moderate confidence I had in their professions would have been lessened, and my conciliatory tendencies not a little embarrassed. If it be, as I think it was, a mistake on the part of the English and French ministers, concealing or omitting to communicate these things, it was not without its good fruits in allowing my peaceful inclinations to have full scope. I do not at all regret what was done or omitted last summer; but I

deprecate any criticism on the course of the United States, when, either intentionally or inconsiderately, information to which we were entitled, in the friendly co-operation to which we supposed we were invited, was withheld."

Mr. McLane was naturally incensed at this result, and in a despatch to Mr. Marcy, of the 19th November, 1854, (p. 285,) he expressed his disappointment very plainly, in an urgent suggestion that what he called a "more positive policy" should be adopted by the United States, and that, if the Emperor should, on a new and direct appeal by the President, continue obdurate, the Peiho, the Yangtse, the Min, and the Canton Rivers should be at once blockaded by the united naval forces of Great Britain, France, and the United States, and held until "all the commercial privileges demanded by the foreigners should be conceded." Happily, in our judgment at least, cooler temper prevailed at Washington; but it will, we think, be very evident, that it was in the communion of English, American, and French diplomatists in 1854, and their sympathy in disappointment and a sense of wrong, and in these threats of war and blockade, so inconsiderately talked of, maturing, as we shall see, in Mr. Parker's suggestion, a year later, that there should be reprisals by an actual seizure of territory, that we may find the origin of the absurd expectation, on the part of the English and French cabinets, that we were willing to unite with them, even to the bitter end of actual war with China,—an expectation which, but for the discretion and good feeling predominant last summer, when the crisis came, might have led to very unpleasant results. Mr. McLane, whose health was much impaired, returned home in December, 1854, leaving Mr. Parker in charge. Mr. Parker left China soon afterward, on leave of absence; but in the summer of 1855, receiving the appointment of Commissioner, on Mr. McLane's resignation, he returned, reaching Hong Kong on the last day of December, 1855.

Mr. Parker's term of service proved to be a very troubled one; for it was a period of war, and, however we may differ as to some of the conclusions at which he arrived, no one can read his correspondence without being impressed by its revelations of high patriotism, singularly amiable temper,—some-

times sorely tried by those about him,—and most zealous devotion to the public trust. It is not easy, let us say, in passing, to judge of the exact merits of diplomatic agents without seeing both sides of their correspondence, and especially the instructions under which they act. Here we have but one side; for the Secretary of State did not, at the time when the call for papers was made, deem it proper to lay before Congress the letters of the Department. We can only infer their substance, and a reference to dates satisfies us that few indeed were the communications made from Washington, and that the Minister in China was pretty much left to his own imaginings. “Excepting,” wrote our Minister on the 7th of May, 1856, “the encouraging note of the Secretary of the Navy, no government despatch has been received for the past four months”! Mr. Parker, all things considered, was fully adequate to his work. It was, we think, his misfortune to go to China by the way of Europe, and in his transit to have interviews and conferences with the two distinguished statesmen who then administered the Foreign Departments of Great Britain and France, Lord Clarendon and Count Walewski. There is no use in denying that a peer of the realm, an actual nobleman in the flesh, has very great influence on a fresh democrat,—using the word in its widest and not its party sense,—such as Mr. Parker was when, in 1855, after a life of devoted missionary and professional labor, he became an ambassador; and it is not easy to read his elaborate despatches and minutes of interviews in Downing Street and at Count Walewski’s hotel without a smile. The war with Russia was over, and the enlistment question, though a little soreness remained, was pretty well healed; and it was in entire good humor that Lord Clarendon seems to have welcomed Mr. Parker. They talked blandly together about “concurrent action and co-operation” in China,—a phrase which means nothing or everything. They talked of “a common language and a common literature,”—those ancient, convenient, almost smoothly-worn stereotypes. They spoke of the *Times’s* leader of yesterday, and the *Morning Post* of to-day; and Lord Clarendon (we can fancy the twinkle of his eye) assured Mr. Parker, “upon his honor,” “that the London

Gazette was the only organ of the government." Then Mr. Parker told the Earl that it had always been "his sentiment, that England and America united have it in their power to maintain the peace of the world, and to bless the world"; and then the Earl, "with much earnestness," rejoined, "These are my sentiments exactly," and added, — so says the record, — "I always feel differently towards America than towards any other nation"; and then "he expressed himself most favorably towards the President and Secretary of State"! They then diverged to Spain and Greece, and thence back again to China, Lord Clarendon saying idiomatically, that as to piracy in China "there was no use being mealy-mouthed about it." "He followed Mr. Parker to the door," by way of pleasantry observed that "he should have great pleasure, on opening of Parliament, to speak of the *triple alliance*," and so, "with a very cordial shake of the hand, they parted." Mr. Parker's interview with Count Walewski is described with the same accuracy; and we honestly think that our plenipotentiary never entirely recovered from this aristocratic contact. "Concurrence and co-operation" were his leading ideas, ever afterward.

The impression which these interviews, so faithfully recorded, leaves on us, is that China was not much thought of at the time by the politicians of London and Paris, though it very soon after assumed quite an important position in the politics of the West; for, as we all remember, in less than twelve months from the time when Lord Clarendon and Mr. Parker were interchanging generalities and platitudes, there was a ministerial crisis, and what was regarded as a popular triumph of one party in England on this very China question.

As we have already stated, Mr. Parker had no better success than his predecessors in bringing Yeh to a personal interview. When his letter first went to Canton, Yeh's title as a cabinet minister was inadvertently omitted, — it was returned unopened, so sharply punctilious are these Orientals; and when it was at last acknowledged, the negative answer was given which we have already cited. Mr. Parker, who seems to have entered on his duties with great earnestness, determined to go north and visit the open ports at once; but it was

not until July, 1856, that he was enabled to do so, owing to the inability of the naval commander-in-chief to furnish him with a suitable conveyance, Japan and Siam still interfering with our great material interests in China. On the 1st of July, 1856, he sailed northward in the *Levant*. On reaching Foochow, the intelligence was received of the homicide of a young American of the name of Cunningham, who had been fatally stabbed in a street brawl a few days previously. To this subject of "grievance" he gave most earnest and efficient attention; and these papers show that, though thwarted by every conceivable device on the part of the Chinese authorities, and obliged in the end to have recourse to the extreme measure of stopping the duties, he at last succeeded in bringing the supposed murderers to justice. We say the "supposed" murderers; for, under the voluntary or compulsory vicariousness of the Chinese system, no one can be quite sure that substitutes do not undergo the penalty of crime. In the blue book laid before the House of Lords, in 1857, we find (p. 218) that the British Vice-Consul at Foochow wrote to Sir John Bowring that, as Mr. Cunningham's murder was "purely an American affair," he was doing his best to prevent British subjects from meddling in it, and Lord Clarendon expressly approved of this policy of "neutrality." It seems, therefore, that it is only when Englishmen are outraged that "concurrency and co-operation" are desired. Mr. Parker proceeded to Shanghai, where we find him in August and September, 1856, anxious to act, helpless from want of facilities for motion, and a little despondent as to the practical and active co-operation which he anticipated. We infer this from the following extract from a despatch to Mr. Marcy of the 3d of September, in which, with most commendable resignation, Mr. Parker says:—

"The contemplated plan of concurrent action on the part of Great Britain, France, and the United States never appeared to me more wise or desirable than at this moment, and with our present knowledge of the state of the empire; yet the causes that have operated to frustrate that plan thus far seem not to be the result of policy or choice on the part of the two former powers, but the effect of influences superior to the will of even sovereign states. That the extraordinary impedi-

ments hitherto to the accomplishment of this threefold concurrent policy and action emanate from an all-overruling Will, may yet become manifest."

On his way north, Mr. Parker landed at Amoy, and there, in an interview with the Governor-General of the Fukien and Cheh-Kiang provinces and an Imperial Commissioner, delivered for transmission to Peking his credentials, and a letter from the President to the Emperor. While he was at Shanghai, in the autumn, this letter was sent back, under some frivolous pretext, with the seals broken. It is entirely uncertain whether it ever left the hands of the local authorities, though Mr. Parker seems to have been of opinion that it went to Peking, and was there copied. Had the American squadron been available, it was our Minister's intention to proceed at once to the Peiho and make a new attempt at a revision of the treaty,—the twelve years having fully expired. The ships were not, however, at his command; the season was far advanced; the English and French co-operators were hanging back; and Mr. Parker, after an ineffectual attempt to reopen negotiations with the Viceroy of the Leang-Kwang, returned to the south of China in November, 1856, to find everything in confusion there, and that chapter of woe upon woe to China, and perplexity and annoyance to every one else, opened, the end of which is not yet. The *lorcha Arrow* had been boarded, and redress refused; the wretched suburbs of Canton had been bombarded; Yeh's Yamun invaded by Admiral Seymour and his marines, and plundered; and war was practically existing between Great Britain and China.\*

We have no inclination to discuss anew the merits of the controversy which Sir John Bowring began, and which Lord Elgin is supposed to have terminated. Who would now care to read or think about a petty Oriental conflict, when he can refresh himself with the stronger interest and deeper blood-

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\* "I arrived upon the ground," says Consul Perry, in his official report, (p. 996,) "about half an hour after the walls were carried. I found the English in full possession of the place, — the officers, the soldiers, and the sailors helping themselves to what they pleased. I met Admiral Seymour within Yeh's palace, who kindly gave me permission to take a few articles as mementos of the occurrences of the day."

shed of Magenta and Solferino? Yet, in its day, this China war was a leading and stirring incident. It was the occasion, as we have said, of a ministerial crisis in England; and perhaps never in our day has there been a more remarkable spectacle of Parliamentary gladiatorship, and, we must add, of intense party spirit, than was exhibited in the debate on Mr. Cobden's motion of censure on Lord Palmerston's China policy. It gave that veteran tactician a chance for an appeal to the people, as it is called; the result being a victory by a sort of huzza,—“Palmerston forever!”—and a new lease of power to his party. But on the question itself, in its origin and its consequences, we have a very clear opinion. It seems to us that the case of the lorcha Arrow involved the assertion of something clearly akin to our American doctrine of the sanctity of the flag, and we therefore should think that the English authorities were, in the outset, right. The wrong of which Sir John Bowring complained, and for which he made the first reprisals, was nothing but an insult to the mere flag; for the British license under which the Arrow sailed, had expired eleven days before she was boarded by the Chinese. In fact and in law, she was not a British bottom; but the British flag was flying, and it was the British flag that was ignominiously hauled down; and when Sir John Bowring said, in his despatch to the Consul, that it made no difference as to the license having expired, inasmuch as the Chinese did not know it, he uttered no such iniquitous doctrine as Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone attributed to him, but simply stated a fact which he thought illustrated the Chinese *animus*, the insult of the flag being precisely the same, whether she had a sailing license or not. “We have heard,” said Lord Palmerston at Tiverton, “a great deal of technical argument about registers, and colonial ordinances, and imperial laws; but the question is a very broad and simple one. *Here was a vessel with the British flag flying.*” If the English were right in the first instance, they were, it seems to us, as clearly wrong in expanding the ground of quarrel with the Chinese by seizing the occasion for asserting a claim to entrance to the city, under the supplementary agreement of 1847; and they were very soon made to appear more in the wrong by the failure of

the military operations at the outset. Sir John Bowring and Admiral Seymour were compelled to admit, that, so far as any diplomatic result was attained, every step they took was a disappointment. "Take an imperial junk," said Sir John to the Admiral, "and Yeh will yield." The junk was taken, and Yeh laughed at them. "Seize the river forts, and all will be right." The Dutch and French Folly were taken, and no good came of it. "Assault the Barrier forts, down the river," cried Sir John. They were taken, though not dismantled, and Yeh was as obstinate as ever; and in less than a fortnight the guns on these very forts were remounted, and their capacity for mischief was as great as before. Even the breach of the walls, the assault of the city, and the entrance of the Yamun of the Viceroy, did no good; and the close of the year saw the English virtually driven out of the river, the factories burned to the ground, and Yeh actually engaged, in his ferocious fashion, in attempting operations against Hong Kong, and the passenger steamers between that colony and Macao. As early as the 6th of November, Mr. Parker wrote to Sir John Bowring, "The Admiral has now attacked the Chinese government in all the principal assailable points, and it remains, in the event of our meeting with further opposition on the part of the Imperial Commissioner, to consider the importance and the manner in which we are to maintain the position in which we now find ourselves, and from which it would be infinitely dangerous for us to recede"; and yet they did recede. Again, on the 14th of November, in a printed circular, the Consul said: "The Admiral sees no immediate prospect of a restoration of quiet. *The security of the foreign position will be as well cared for as heretofore*, but the nature and object of the measures now to be resorted to, his Excellency deems it desirable to keep to himself." In less than a month afterward, the factories were burned to the ground, and every foreigner driven from his position.

All this time American commercial interests were paralyzed, and, what might have been much more serious, there was great and increasing danger every moment that we should be politically embroiled in what, as the Consul had said of Mr. Cunningham's murder the year before, was "no affair of

ours." Let us briefly state the dangers and the escape. When, on the 29th of October, 1856, the Admiral entered Yeh's palace, not only was Mr. Consul Perry there, helping himself to "mementos," but another consul, Mr. Keenan from Hong Kong, was in the breach, in very suspicious proximity to an American flag, that was waved about by some one, for the purpose of protection or display. Commander Foote, then on duty with his marines at the Factories, at once, and earnestly, disavowed these acts. This, however, was an incident of no moment in comparison with what followed soon after. Among the papers laid before Parliament were one or two documents of great interest, as giving the Chinese version of what was going on. We specially refer now to a paper entitled "An Address of the Inhabitants of the whole City to the British Plenipotentiary," and dated on the 5th. It came from Howqua's house, and probably was got up by his agency. It is very cleverly done, and we regret we have room but for a brief extract.

"There is one point of which you lose sight. You do not remember that our authorities are subject to promotion, translation, and similar changes of office, which may remove them from Kwangtung; in the twinkling of an eye its whole establishment may be changed. But the native trader has been here, generation after generation, from father to son, from grandsire to grandson, for hundreds and thousands of years, without interruption of the line. You do not reflect upon the distant future, that, to inflict injury on the Canton people, is to make enemies of thousands and millions of men; that the longer the feud endures, the deeper-rooted it will be; that the more protracted the struggle, the more impetuous will be the zeal for it. Is it in your power to go the extreme length of injury that can be inflicted? To resolve on this, is truculently to contemplate the extermination of every living being in Canton,—is to contemplate the total abandonment of its trade. What, in that case, would be your gain? And, if resolved to go this length, how are you to dispose of the French, the Americans, and other foreign nations? This is the unanimous declaration, made with sincerity and earnestness, of the Cantonese. We submit it in the hope that your Excellency will deign to consider it, and we respectfully present our wishes for your Excellency's peace and prosperity."

This document had no effect, as the British plan of opera-

tions was determined. But, knowing Howqua's intimate relations with some of the American firms, and his friendliness to Americans generally, it is not difficult to trace a connection between this attempt at conciliation and the determination formed a day or two afterward by the Americans, to withdraw from the scene of conflict, and to give no countenance to what might be done or attempted. The Chinese seem, however, to have the knack of frustrating all friendly action ; for, as is well known, it was while one of the leading American merchants (Mr. Sturgis) was actually on his way, in one of the man-of-war boats, to request the Commodore to withdraw the sailors and marines from Canton, that the flag was fired on by the Barrier forts, and a conflict most unexpectedly precipitated. There is no better, or certainly no more lively account of what then occurred, than that contained in Lord Palmerston's hustings speech, from which we have already made an extract.

"We are often told," said his Lordship at Tiverton, "to look to our cousins in the United States as models of conduct, and there are some things in which they might just as well look to us [A laugh] ; but if we beg of the advocates of peace to address themselves with 'eyes right' to the United States, pray what did their commander do, in this very difficulty in China, in comparison with our officers, civil and naval? Why, there was a boat belonging to one of their ships of war fired at. Well, that was a great insult ; but there might have been an excuse made for it, that we were engaged in these hostilities with China, and it might have been said that this American was taken for an English boat. It is true, the officers in that boat waved the American flag ; but the Chinese might have said that is a well-known strategy of war, and you wave the American flag to deceive us, — we believed it was an English boat, and therefore fired at it. But did the American commander, like Sir Michael Seymour and Sir John Bowring, demand an apology, and demand that a similar thing should not occur again? Not the least in the world. He inverted the usual course, which is said to be characteristic of energy, — a word and a blow ; he put it thus, — a blow and a word. [Cheers and laughter.] He began to knock down the fort ; and, after destroying that fort, he sent to the Commissioner to say an insult had been offered to his flag, and he hoped for an apology [Cheers], and an assurance to the effect that it would not happen again [Cheers] ; and he gave twenty-four hours for this apology and explanation to be sent to him ; but before these twenty-four hours had expired,

the ship which was lying near this fort saw something or other going on, which the officers shrewdly imagined was for renewed defence, if not for renewed attack. Well, this American officer, without waiting and writing to the United States to know what to do, — without waiting for orders from Washington, — he did not wait even for the twenty-four hours to expire, but he said, ‘No, no, Mr. Chinaman, this won’t do; you are throwing up fresh batteries and putting in fresh guns;’ and he commenced the demolition of the fort, and took possession of these guns before the time had expired which he had given the Chinese Commissioner in order to make his apology and explanation. [Cheers.]”

This, though jocular, is a very fair account of what occurred; but we should do much injustice were we to omit to add, that the whole affair of the Barrier forts was eminently creditable to all concerned in it; — to Mr. Sturgis and his commercial friends, who, the moment they saw their country’s flag insulted, were most anxious to see it promptly and thoroughly vindicated; to Commodore Armstrong, who authorized the movement, and so directed it that the “blow and the word” proved to be the true policy, — for Yeh neither then nor afterward uttered a word of complaint; and especially to Captain Foote, (one of the most gallant and distinguished officers of our service,) who carried his beautiful little corvette, the *Portsmouth*, into close action under a heavy fire, without touching the shore, in all the intricacies of those most vexatious tide-ways, and kept her there until he had silenced the four batteries. “The fire,” wrote the British Consul, “was kept up with great animation on both sides until night closed in, when first the fire of the forts, and then that of the ships, slackened and ceased”! On the second day afterward, the forts were assaulted and destroyed; and no traveller now passes up the Canton River, and sees the heavy masonry of these forts thrown into utter and remediless ruin, without high admiration of the decisive gallantry by which it was effected. “During their protracted and arduous service,” Admiral Seymour wrote to the Admiralty, “the American officers and men displayed their accustomed gallantry and energy.”

This brush seemed a perfect godsend to the English authorities, consular, military, and diplomatic, who took it for

granted that we were now completely involved, and had drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard; and they have never yet been able, we think, to comprehend clearly how we managed, for a special grievance of our own, to hit the Chinese so hard a blow without entangling ourselves in a protracted struggle. Sir John Bowring sent special reports home of the whole affair, telling Lord Clarendon that "the relations of the United States to China were in a most unsatisfactory state"; and, without a moment's delay, sought Mr. Parker, before the American blood could have time to cool, in the following note, which we find in these documents, dated on the very day when the Americans were blowing up the forts.

"British Canton Consulate, November 20, 1856.

"MY DEAR DR. PARKER:—

"I think it is of the greatest importance that you and the Commodore should visit our Admiral and me.

"Yeh is inexorable, and has returned a most unsatisfactory answer to my communication.

"If Commodore Armstrong and yourself could come up, that would be the best plan, perhaps; if not, Sir M. Seymour and I would come down to you to-morrow. Pray let me know which it shall be.

"We have thrown shot and shell into the Pagoda, and beyond the wall of the city into the camp,—also among the yamuns of the governor and Tartar general; but all in vain.

"We can hardly fail in effecting much, if we move harmoniously together.

Very truly yours,

"JOHN BOWRING."

Of the conference held in pursuance of this cordial invitation, we have, in these and the Parliamentary documents, two rather different accounts, tinged no doubt by the hopes and feelings of the writers. Mr. Parker describes his action and that of the Commodore as cautious and circumspect, and especially alludes to his disavowal on the part of the United States of any countenance to the claim of intramural intercourse, even to the extent of disclaiming Sir Michael Seymour's demand of it on behalf of "all foreign officials"; while, on the other hand, Sir John Bowring—"the wish," no doubt, "father to the thought"—wrote to the Foreign Office that the American officials "expressed the most cordial sympathy with

his proceedings, and the earnest desire to act, as far as possible, in harmony with his policy." This despatch was received in London on the 16th of January, 1857, shortly before Lord Clarendon's letter to Lord Napier, directing him to invite the active co-operation of our government in the Chinese hostilities.

But the seeds planted in London and Paris were, in spite of all caution and repression, germinating in the heated atmosphere of the Canton River, and we seem to have been pretty rapidly drifting into the vortex of "co-operation"; for we find among these papers a despatch to Secretary Marcy, dated December 12, 1856, in which Mr. Parker makes what he himself describes as the "startling" suggestion of reprisal on the part of the Western nations, by hoisting the French flag in Corea, the English in Chusan, and the American in Formosa, and retaining these territories till the Emperor should come to terms. That we may do no injustice, and that our readers may see how near the edge we were, we quote Mr. Parker's very words.

"Firm, friendly, and determined policy must be adopted, and I here venture confidentially to suggest, for the consideration of the President and his cabinet, the propriety of *each* of the plenipotentiaries being authorized by their respective governments to adopt, *as a last resort*, any of those measures authorized by the laws of nations 'when a state refuses to fulfil a perfect obligation which it has contracted, or to permit another nation to enjoy a right which it claims.' (Wheaton's Elements of International Law, p. 362.) Were the three representatives of England, France, and America, on presenting themselves at the Peiho, in case of their not being welcomed to Peking, to say the French flag will be hoisted in Corea, the English again at Chusan, and the United States in Formosa, and there remain till satisfaction for the past and a right understanding for the future are granted, but being granted, these possessions shall *instantly* be restored, negotiation would no longer be obstructed, and the most advantageous and desirable results to *all* concerned secured. Nothing could be more alarming to this government, and justly so, than the apprehension of the possession of any of its territory by foreigners. This will be a legitimate, effectual, and *humane* policy, far preferable to the destruction of forts, the bombardment of cities, and the destruction of life and property. It is only the extreme state of foreign relations with China to which we

have arrived that authorizes the suggestion of such a startling policy. Treaty obligations have been violated, just claims are treated with contempt, the lives of foreigners are wantonly sacrificed, the supreme authorities of Western nations, as well as their representatives in China, have been treated with contempt by the imperial authorities, commerce has been impeded, and hostile and deadly collisions have been brought about, so that some decisive measures on the part of Western governments have become inevitable. It is as a *last resort*, not to be adopted till friendly application has been made at Peking, that the above suggestion is made, and with a strong probability it will not be necessary; that a mere intimation to the authorities at the North will suffice; that, if by them compelled, the measure will be adopted, the intimation being made in a way that they shall understand the foreign ministers are empowered and ready to carry it into effect, if need be. If unfortunately driven a step beyond the threat, to its execution, the presumption is still stronger that *that* will certainly prevail, and the *last resort* of injured nations will thus be avoided, which, unless superseded by the success of these intermediate measures which are short of actual hostilities, may be the deplorable issue."

And again, on the 12th of February, 1857, he writes:—

"The subject of Formosa is becoming one of great interest to a number of our enterprising fellow-citizens, and deserves more consideration from the great commercial nations of the West than it has yet received; and it is much to be hoped that the government of the United States may not *shrink* from the *action* which the interests of humanity, civilization, navigation, and commerce impose upon it in relation to Tai-Wan, particularly the southeastern portion of it, at present inhabited by savages, to whose depraved cruelties we have every reason to believe many Europeans, and among them our own friends and countrymen, have fallen victims; and unless prompt measures are adopted to prevent, under the already vast and annually increasing commerce of this part of the world, the number of savage massacres will be greatly augmented. The correspondence embraced in exhibit G, relating to this subject, is respectfully commended to your special notice; also despatch No. 34, of December 12."

This policy of taking islands and commencing colonies in the Eastern seas may perhaps seem startling to some of our conservative readers at home; and yet it would be quite interesting to see how often this notion has been broached, and what favor it has occasionally found. Sometimes it is pre-

sented in the modest form of a coal-station or a guano deposit, and sometimes in the more ambitious shape of a great colonial settlement in Formosa. Just at the time when the English government — unhappily, we think, for the interests of humanity — were turning the cold shoulder on new colonies in Asia and Africa, on Borneo, Natal, and New Zealand, some of our public men were thinking and talking about what, after all, are but colonies in distant regions.\* In 1852, Commodore Perry suggested to Mr. Fillmore's government the propriety of "securing" one of the Lew Chew Islands as a place of refuge and supply for our whaling-ships, and hinted at his own great success in past years "in subjugating towns and communities in other parts of the world"; and the idea was not altogether discouraged. When, a year later, Commodore Perry renewed the suggestion, on the ground of reprisals for some alleged wrong done by the Japanese, Mr. Secretary Dobbin thus extinguished it: —

"Your suggestion about holding one of the Lew Chew Islands 'upon the ground of reclamation for insults and injuries committed upon American citizens,' should the Japanese government refuse to negotiate, or to assign a port of resort for our merchant and whaling ships, is more embarrassing. The subject has been laid before the President, who, while he appreciates highly the patriotic motive which prompts the suggestion, is disinclined, without the authority of Congress, to take and retain possession of an island in that distant country, particularly unless more urgent and potent reasons demanded it than now exist. If, in future, resistance should be offered and threatened, it would also be rather mortifying to surrender the island, if once seized, and rather inconvenient and expensive to maintain a force there to retain it. Indulging the hope that the contingency may not arise to occasion any resort to the expedient suggested, and that your skill, prudence, and good judgment may enable you to triumph over the ignorant obstinacy of the Japanese without violence, it is considered sounder policy not to seize the island, as suggested in your despatch."

That all such acquisitions (annexation has of course a different meaning) are unconstitutional, utterly and absolutely

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\* Congressional Documents 33d Congress, Commodore Perry to Secretary of the Navy, Dec. 14, 1852. Mr. Everett to Commodore Perry, Feb. 15, 1853. Mr. Dobbin to Perry, May 30, 1854.

so, and could only have had their origin in the minds of untrained public men, is very clear to us; and we might turn over such adventurous political speculators to the law on this subject, as laid down by the Supreme Court of the United States in a case which, on this point at least, we hope may be considered as binding authority.

“There is certainly no power,” said Chief Justice Taney, in the *Dred Scott* case, “given by the Constitution to the Federal Government to establish or maintain colonies bordering on the United States, or at a distance, to be ruled and governed at its own pleasure. No power exists to acquire territory to be held and governed permanently in that character. Whatever is acquired must be acquired so as to become a State of the Union, and not to be held as a colony.”—19 *Howard*, 446.

In what way Mr. Parker's recommendation of territorial reprisals was received at Washington, these documents do not expressly show. It must have reached the Department early in February, and we have no further light on the subject than the remark made incidentally in Mr. Reed's Philadelphia speech, that, “during the latter days of Mr. Pierce's administration, Mr. Secretary Marcy instructed our Minister in China that the United States had no cause of war with China, and that there was no obligation, perfect or imperfect, on China to negotiate a revised treaty at or near Peking, or any particular place that *we* might find it expedient or convenient to select.” This was sufficiently repressive.

The remainder of the year 1856 and the early part of 1857 were filled with matters of interest, to which we have not time now to refer, and which perhaps more properly belong to the next chapter of Oriental diplomatic story. The ministerial crisis in England, and Lord Palmerston's popular triumph; the attempt to involve our government in the threatened hostilities; the appointment and despatch of the four special envoys of England, France, Russia, and the United States,—all these can be barely alluded to here. The Earl of Elgin reached China in July, 1857. He at once applied to Mr. Parker to unite with him in a visit to the north; which Mr. Parker declined, not having received any instructions from the new government at Washington, and being naturally un-

willing to act without them. Lord Elgin suddenly determined to pay a visit to India,—then in the strong agony of its bloody revolt,—giving as his reason that he was compelled to await the movements of the newly-appointed American and French envoys; and early in August, the news of Mr. Reed's appointment having been received by the previous mail, Mr. Parker returned to the United States. One other incident of his official term deserves a passing notice, if only to show how utterly regardless of all other interests than their own the English are, even when professions of sympathy are most abundant. Towards the end of July, 1857, more than seven months after the factories had been burned and the English forces virtually driven away, Mr. Sturgis and Mr. Cunningham, two leading American merchants, had a conference with Howqua at Whampoa, with the view of effecting a resumption of neutral trade, and communicated the result, which they thought very favorable, to Mr. Parker. The merchants were naturally restless at the interruption of business, and the chronic character which the English hostilities had assumed. The matter was fully discussed, without anything like a decision being reached, when the British Admiral—whispers of the American experiment having no doubt escaped from the conclave at Macao on the 3d of August—put an end to all doubt by declaring from his flag-ship at Hong Kong the river and port of Canton, and all its entrances, in a state of strict and actual blockade. So in point of form it continued until Lord Elgin removed it, in February, 1857; and so in point of fact,—for no really successful trade can be carried on while such a state of things continues as there has been since the taking of Canton,—it has been from that day to the present. And this not only without a declaration of war, but with reiterated declarations that nothing like war exists.

We have now traced the diplomatic history down to the successful action of 1857–8, and here we must leave it. Of this strange record we do not care to say a word further, or to attempt to point the moral it suggests. One thing is patent, that the Chinese, from the opening of diplomatic relations with them, have never had reason to complain of harshness or injustice at the hands of the United States or its representa-

tives, and ought to make a very clear distinction between us and others. Whether they do so or not, it is very difficult to say. The reports that have reached us of last year's operations seem to show that they do; for it is believed that the American and Russian plenipotentiaries, when brought into contact with the Chinese authorities, not only received great personal courtesy, which costs nothing, and in China means nothing, but encountered no difficulties in effecting their objects. The stipulation in the treaty of Tientsin, that the United States shall, in time of difficulty with other nations, render their good offices to China, inserted at the instance and almost in the very words of the Chinese; the numerous virtually identical repetitions, in every form, of the "most favored" clause; and the very tangible fact that the Chinese government is actually liquidating the American claims, while the mailed hand of war has not extorted a single dollar yet for England or France,—all these things serve to show that, even with Orientals, in spite of Lords Palmerston and Macaulay, who have proclaimed a far less amiable doctrine, honesty is the best policy. Still, one's judgment may well be suspended till the end is seen. At the very moment when we are writing, the news is on its way, and we shall very soon know in what spirit the imperial court means to carry out what by many—in England at least—are considered the great provisions of the treaties of 1858, especially the visit to Peking. The interests and reputation of our country are in charge of a man of energy and discretion, and we feel entire confidence that, if any one gets to the capital, Mr. Ward will; and equal confidence that, if the counsels of rash and light-headed men should happen to prevail,—if the *coûte qui coûte* programme of access to Peking and residence there is to be carried out,—no drop even of Pagan blood should be shed in asserting it. There have been fruitless Chinese wars enough already. Lord Elgin, in his place in Parliament, has said that he felt it his duty to advise her Majesty's government not to press the right of permanent residence at Peking. Mr. Reed, in his Philadelphia speech, has said the same thing, with emphasis, though he deems the visit essential, if an adequate public necessity requires it. Neither the

Russian nor French treaty provides for it; so that, unless there be great indiscretion on the part of nations who go to war easily, and by mere executive will, the prospect of a resumption of peaceful relations is very fair. The desolation of Canton should be a solemn warning.

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ART. IX. — PLUTARCH'S *Lives*. *The Translation called DRYDEN'S, corrected and revised by A. H. CLOUGH*, sometime Fellow and Tutor of Oriel College, Oxford, and late Professor of the English Language and Literature at University College, London. In five vols. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1859.

As there are many more persons capable of appreciating portraits than there are who can understand or enjoy landscape-painting, so are the pupils of biography much more numerous than those of history. And as for the writers and readers of professed history, are not the most popular works from their pens or in their hands virtually biographies? Lands and ages are described mainly by the memoirs of their representative men; and it is not events or institutions, but personages, that sustain interest in the narrative. Dramatic power is no less essential to the historian who shall win the suffrages of the multitude, than to the play-writer whose productions shall obtain an enduring fame in the theatre. Annals are consulted, not read. Constitutional histories are for the student only. Niebuhr and Hallam, the most philosophical historians of any age, are dull simply because their narratives are to so great a degree impersonal; while Macaulay's pages fascinate young and old, the illiterate and the cultured alike, because he makes each individual actor play his part and tell his story in the public eye and ear.

There is reason and right in this. Because it is so profoundly true, it is almost too trite to be repeated, that "the proper study of mankind is man." Consciousness is the recipient and interpreter of history; and consciousness identi-